

White Pelican

This face -
ancient as hunger,
with its naked, reptile yawn -
is the giveaway;
This is a dinosaur
wearing clothes
of a swan.

But when pelicans fly
in their measured and undulant lines,
each wingstroke precise as a beat;
when they spiral past towers of summer cloud
in counterpoint rhythms of shadow and white
for no reason any of us can find
but delight -

I know why birds have survived,
while their kin who bred terror
with armor and girth
have turned to stone
in the tomb of the earth.

Lynne Bama, 2003

